School District No. 46
(Sunshine Coast)
A COMMUNITY ENGAGED IN LIFELONG LEARNING
AND EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Delivered via e-mail: educ.minister@gov.bc.ca

March 17, 2014

Hon. Minister Peter Fassbender
Ministry of Education
Po Box 9045 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Fassbender:

On March 11, 2014, the Board of Education of School District No.46 (Sunshine Coast) passed a motion to express our concerns to you regarding the impact of Judge Griffin's decision and the subsequent labour relations instability with the teachers of the province and our district.

Our concerns focus on three areas:

1. Bargaining a new collective agreement with teachers

   We urge you in the strongest terms to negotiate in good faith and conclude an agreement with the BCTF. We believe there must be a middle ground in which the government and the BCTF can come to an agreement that is fair to teachers and puts the focus back on the needs of students.

2. Full funding of contract costs

   All cost increases negotiated in a new collective agreement must be fully funded by the Ministry of Education. There are no savings to be found in our district budgets for increased contractual expenses. We value all of our employees and want to ensure that they receive fair and secure compensation for their work. It has been very challenging to meet the new costs associated with the provincially negotiated agreement with CUPE staff. Can you commit to funding all additional expenses negotiated in a new collective agreement with BCTF?

3. Stability for students is paramount to us.

   We support the Stability for Students Action plan submitted by the BCSTA. In addition to the four points in that action plan, we want you to be aware that the instability of protracted bargaining and potential strike action affects all of our community. We urge you to bring some flexibility to your negotiations to conclude an agreement prior to the

beginning of the 2014/15 school year. Students suffer when labour relations are uncertain.

We appreciate the long hours and effort throughout the bargaining process. We truly hope that a new contract will reflect the commitment of all partners for a respectful, stable and fully resourced education system. We put a lot of faith in students to create a positive future. Our commitment to them is to provide a safe and predictable learning environment. We look forward to your partnership in this endeavour.

Sincerely,

Betty Baxter
Board Chair

c.c. Board of Education of School District No. 46 (Sunshine Coast)
Patrick Bocking, Superintendent of Schools
Nicholas Weswick, Secretary-Treasurer
Nicholas Simons, MLA, Powell River-Sunshine Coast
All Boards of Education, via BCSTA